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ELECTION
TO
LIFE ETERNAL;
A
PRIZE
OF
INESTIMABLE WORTH,

WHICH

*EVERY ONE, BY SEASONABLE AND
PROPER ATTENTION, MAY
MAKE HIS OWN.*

By Samuel Baker.

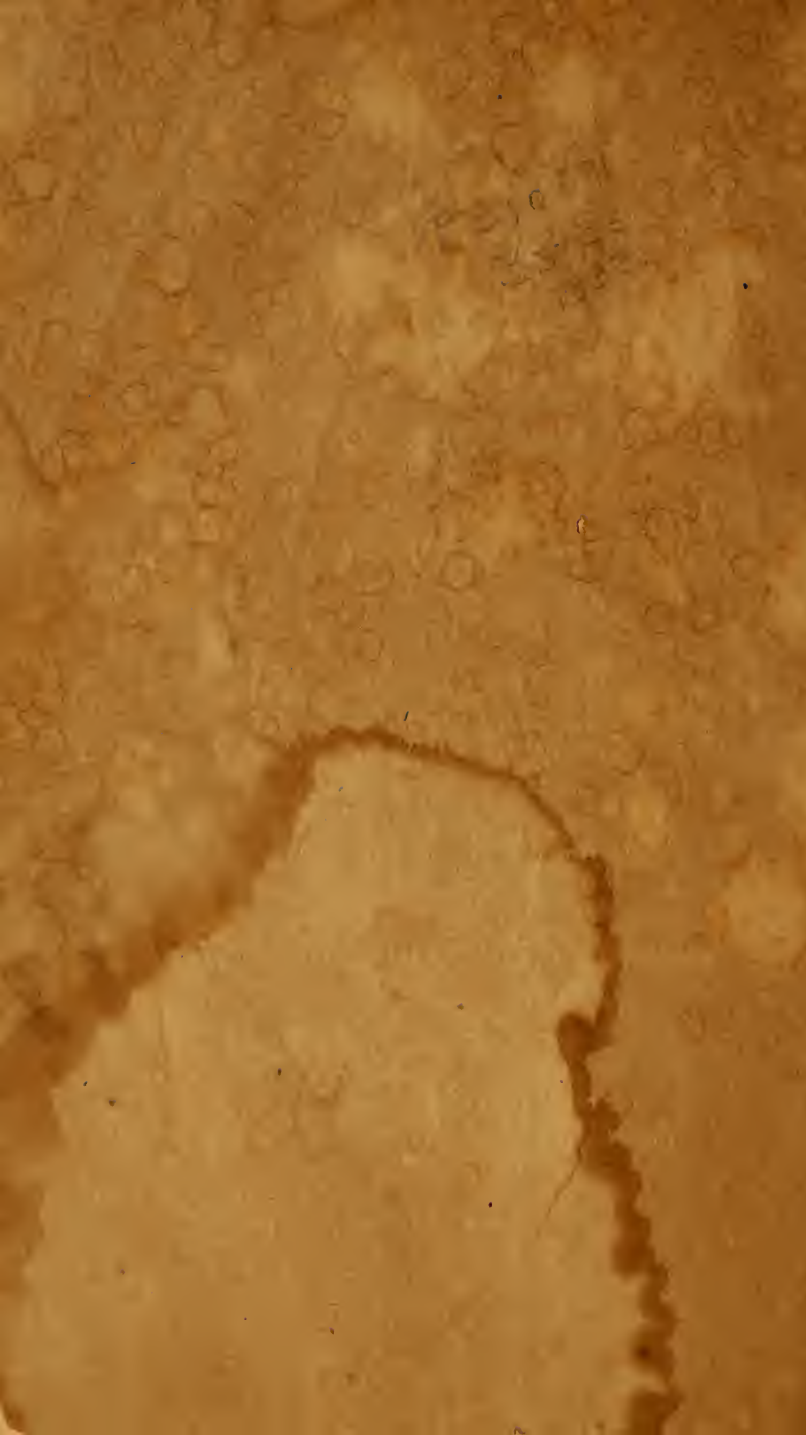
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TO THE READER.

ELECTION, as it has generally been preached, has been, perhaps, the greatest hindrance to people's seeking the Lord at all, or seeking him aright, or seeking him with suitable zeal, or most of all, to their seeking him with perseverance, of any thing ever advanced in the world among Pagans, Jews, Mahometans, or Christians.

The following poem shows that it is in truth a real encouragement to every one to seek the Lord.

The author has observed that the doctrine in general has either been so explained as to put all God's holy attributes on the rack, and perfectly stupify common sense; or else flung away and trodden down as most productive error, without having a fair explanation. He therefore conceived a de-

PREFACE.

sign of remedying this evil, by giving it a fair illustration. He has found that this method has been of essential use to numbers.

The reader is requested not to read this at all unless he determines to read it so as to take the sense, and then not reject light knowingly.

The blessed Spirit will be near you while you read, and will give you instruction if you ask him.

ELECTION, &c.



FIRST PART.

ELECTION, precious word, if understood,
And great encouragement to seek the Lord;
But when mistaken, then, it always tends
To sinful negligence and woful ends.

'Tis said by some, Election means to take
Some *wicked* men, subjects of grace to make;
And others leave to suffer justice's part,
Without sufficient grace to change their heart.
This is Election wrongly understood,
And has a tendency to lead *from* God.
Others suppose, Election, rendered plain,
Is the peculiar mark of holy men;
So all who are by faith to Jesus wed,
Are his elect, as members in their head:
This is Election evidently pure,
Which any one, by striving, may secure.

All who obey the precious Gospel call,
And learn of Him who gave his life for all,
Are by his blood most precious purified,
And chose as suitable to be his Bride.
Hence, as I said, Election, when defined,
Gives great encouragement to every mind.

And if a Prince should issue a decree,
That all whose robes are white his face should see,
And see his glory, and enjoy his rest,
And at his table be a welcome guest;
And that his servants in obedience might
Wash their polluted robes and make them white;
And so Elected be; this Prince of grace
Provides for every one in every place,
A cleansing fountain, sure to make them white,
The moment they shall bathe in it aright.
He also sends his heralds night and day,
To teach them how to wash their filth away;
And how to know they are his chosen race.
According to his purposes of grace.

Now all who do his gracious word believe,
Obey, and wash,—they in his favor live:
They his Elect, he marks *them* for his own,
And always in his wisdom were foreknown.

Christ is this prince, the fountain is his blood;
The heralds are the ministers of God;
And those he calls to come and wash them clean.
Are all the wretched race of fallen men;
And those who come and wash them clean and white,
Become his chosen objects of delight;
His own Elect, and precious in his eyes;
By him foreknown before he built the skies.

This fountain is to all defil'd with sin,
What Jordan was to Naaman's leprous skin:
Then view the method God with him pursu'd,
And learn the way the soul must be renew'd.

Naaman, on hearing, comes with all his grief;
Elisha tells him how to find relief:
Go now to Jordan, did the prophet say,
And in it wash thy foul disease away;
Go dip seven times to prove thy faith sincere,
And from thy leprosy thou shalt be clear.
This humble method, like the gospel call.
So full of works, yet void of merit all;
Did much disgust the haughty Syrian prince,
Until his servant did his mind convince.
Some mighty deeds, methinks, his servant cries;
Would doubtless, have been pleasing in thine eyes;
Much rather, then submit to duties mean,
And bathe thyself in Jordan and be clean.
This humble method wisdom takes as fit
To stain thy pride, and make thy will submit;
But yet 'tis not thy works nor Jordan's flood
Can cleanse thee, but the hand of Jacob's God.
This sovereign hand of mercy will be kind,
To all who exercise a willing mind.
But such as obstinate remain must lie
Void of all help, and in disorder die.

The word *receiv'd* now bows his stubborn heart,
And precious faith performs her cogent part;
The leper turns, and shifts his course to ride.
With all his pompous train to Jordan's side;
And there he humbly bathes his sickly frame.
'Till like a child's, his flesh and skin became.
A striking type of all the sanctified,
Who wash'd in Jesus's blood, become his bride;

All who, like Naaman, wash them clean and fair,
 To live and reign with Jesus, chosen are.
 This is Election rendered plain and true,
 And gives to God and man their proper due;
 To God for cleansing grace the glory is,
 To man the due obedience and the bliss.
 Let none imagine, then, himself Elect,
 Until to godliness he has respect;
 When Christ by humble faith is formed within,
 In holy triumph over every sin;
Then is the man by Christ a chosen guest,
 And may with safety hope for endless rest.

King David had the same consistent view,
 And speaks impressive what he clearly knew;
 "But know," says he, (nor doubt it in your heart;)
 "God sets the godly for himself apart."*
 Not the ungodly his elect can be,
 But such as do by faith the promise see.

Paul, too, declares of ev'ry chosen one,
 Elect in Christ before the world begun.
 Not *out* of Christ, a vile and filthy race,
 But *in* him, that is, made anew by grace;
 To be in Christ, is to become divine;
 Hence Paul and David both in one combine.
 One views the chosen first to sinning dead,
 The other views them first in Christ their head;
 And both agree that all the chosen line,
 Were branches, first, of Christ the living vine;
 Foreknown and chose before the world began;
 As Christ is said to have been slaughter'd then.†

Moses and Malachi unite to teach,
 What Paul and David us'd to talk and preach:
 Obey, says Moses, what I now record,
 And you shall be the *treasure* of the Lord.
 And Malachi would teach the Jews to fear
 Their God, and so his precious ones appear!‡

CHAPTER II.

THIS theme with Paul we further may pursue,
 And other striking colors bring to view.
 Whom God predestinated were *foreknown*,

*Psalm iv. 3. Eph. i. 4. The word here translated chosen, means also elect, both having the same meaning.

† Rev. xiii. 8. ‡ See Ex. xix. 5, &c. and Malachi, iii. 16 17.

Conformed to the image of his Son;*
Foreknown as true believers of his word,
Predestinated fav'rites of the Lord.
 Call'd as his sheep to share his special love;
 At last to reign with him in bliss above.
 Now see foreknowledge and decree of God,
 And how the vile are cleans'd in Jesus's blood;
 How both unite to save by grace, but still,
 Both exercise and then reward free-will.
 The blood is spilt, the fountain open'd free,
 And calls and warnings given by decree;
 Then comes foreknowledge to discover who
 Will bathe in blood and thus be made anew.
 Such in foreknowledge, therefore, chosen were
 Before the day-spring did the morn prepare.

Peter the great, and son of thunder nam'd,
 For energy and pathos equal fam'd;
 When he attempts to teach electing grace,
 How modest and how guarded what he says.
 Elect,† saith he, as God the Father knew,
Foreknowledge, not *decree* according to;
 Elect in‡ sanctity and humble faith,
 Like to what Paul to the Ephesians saith;
 Now learn how saints of old in one unite,
 And prove the doctrine here convey'd is right.
 St. Peter says Elect *in* holiness;
 St. Paul in Christ Election does express,
 St David says the *righteous* are elect;
 St. Moses to the *obedient* has respect;
 So Malachi and all the holy men,
 Who ever wrote with an inspired pen,
 Have left the same engraven as in gold,
 To guide the wand'ring to their proper fold,
 That mortals may be taught in doctrine pure,
 To make their calling and election sure.

CHAPTER III.

ONCE more, my friend, most humbly I entreat
 That you would further walk this golden street,

*The reader may see that the words *to be*, in this verse, Romans viii. 29, are not in the original, by their being in italics.

†1st Peter, i. 2.

‡The preposition translated, through, in this text, is the same in the original, as that which is translated in, before quoted in Eph, i. 4. It generally means in, but it also means with, by, through, on account of, &c.

And with one witness more be guided right,
Unless you obstinately shun the light.

The dealings of the Lord with Abram's seed
Will teach us how we should the Bible read
Upon this point; contested and sublime;
Of singular importance here in time.
The seed of Abram were a chosen race,
And special treasure of the God of grace;
Though not the *whole* of his or Isaac's sons,
But *all* of Jacob's were the chosen ones;
This Jacob strove in faith and overcame,
And so obtained the new expressive name;
So *now* to conquering faith God has respect,
And such he numbers with his own elect.

Moreover, circumcised were the Jews;
But such as that condition did refuse,
Must not be numbered with the chosen band,
Nor share the blessings of the promised land.
The circumcision in this gospel day,
Are all that in the Spirit sing and pray.
As saith St. Paul. The circumcision we
Who worship God in spirit; hence we see
The circumcised in heart, and *these alone*,
Are now as God's own chosen people known

For further argument from Jewish line,
See all the branches cent'ring in the vine;
See how in Isaac all the seed are found,
And to him all the promises abound.
Christ is *our Isaac*; and in him we see
Member Elect as branches in a tree;
Not in him *in a sense we know not what*,
Nor as dead branches that begin to rot;
But *living* members of a *living* root,
To grow and thrive and bear the precious fruit,
I know some view the Elect in Christ by choice
Before they even hear the Saviour's voice.
If thus you hold, say what can you intend
By this so strange, unscript'ral phrase, my friend?
O can you seriously believe and say,
That one's in Christ that's in the downward way?
A child of Satan and an heir of hell,
But yet in Christ and ever there to dwell!
Whom Jesus chooses are his lovely ones,
Selected from the world, and call'd his sons;
But can a wretched sinner, stained with blood,
Be such a fav'rite of our Saviour God?
If any one's in Christ, the scriptures say

He's made anew—old things are passed away,*
 But in this way, a man in sinning dead,
 May, notwithstanding, be in Christ his head.
 They who are Christ's you know, the truth declares
 Have crucified the flesh and shun'd its snares;†
 That your strange doctrine takes so wide a range,
That one may be in Christ without a change.
 One may, you think, to Jesus Christ belong,
 But yet belong to Satan and his throng!
 May be in Christ the Holy One, but still
 Be in the devil, and obey his will!
 Hail, Babylou! thou great mysterious whore!
 Wilt thou deceive the people more and more?
 And mingle poison in thy golden cup
 So artful, that the whole is drunken up?
 Reader, beware! if thou regard thy soul,
 Nor taste the wine that sparkles in the bowl.
 The pleasant taste but hides the deep distress;
 But, O the end! What dreadful bitterness!

Perhaps you say, my friend, that I mistake
 Your meaning, and the ground you mean to take;
 You mean, perhaps, not that the sinners are
 Elect *in* Christ, but chosen to *BE* there:
 Vessels of mercy I suppose you mean,
 Before they have the need of mercy seen,
 Distinct from others left as reprobate,
 Without provision for a better state.
 But says the word *in* Christ and holiness‡
 They chosen are, who e'er arrive at bliss:
 Not chosen *out* of him and in their sin,
 With a design at last to bring them in.
 Besides, the scriptures state the matter thus:
All unbelievers lie under the curse;
 Not one *elect*, but all, in every state,
 If Christ be not in them, are reprobate,§
 St. Paul was so persuaded in this way,
 That to believers he did plainly say,
 Although elect they had become and clean,
 "You once were heirs of wrath like other men."||
 How vain the notion, then, and false the thought
 That those in whom the work of grace is wrought,
 Were *always* favor'd different from the rest,
 And heirs of glory ere they grace possess.

If some be chose among the wicked ones,
 To be renew'd and to adopt as sons;

* 2 Cor. v. 17.

† Gal. v. 24.

‡ Eph. i. 4.

§ John iii. 18, 36.

|| Eph. ii. 3.

But others left to sink, to worlds below;
 Then Christ is partial any child may know.
 But Christ was never partial in this sense:
 Not in creation, grace, or providence,
 Of but *one blood* was form'd every man;
 Hence God was equal in Creation's plan;
 On *all* he sends his precious heat and dew:
 So in his Providence he's equal too:
 The saving word to *all* he does direct;
 Thus in his grace there still is no respect.
 If some have less of heat and falling showers,
 And others form'd with less immortal powers;
 If some have not the gospel shine so bright,
 But only have the aid of nature's light;
 Yet God, through Christ, will ev'ry mortal save,
 Who well improves, what he in mercy gave;
 Nor does he ask of any mortal worm
 A little more than what he can perform;
 The blessed Saviour never will be known
 'To come to reap where he has never sown:
 He but requires of all the human race,
 The proper use of their own means of grace,
 Then faithful souls, at last, he'll raise to life,
 But doom the rebels to eternal strife.

Were there no grace for part of Adam's line,
 If on a part no rays of mercy shine,
 The wretch without a wedding garment might
 Assure us why he came in such a plight:
 He might reply, instead of speechless guilt,
 "For my poor soul no ransom blood was spilt;
 "The law no marriage supper could provide.
 "And for my life the Saviour never died;
 "No wedding garment could for me be found,
 "In which to wrap my naked soul around,
 "This is the cause I came so naked here;
 "No other way thy servant could appear."
 But facts are stubborn things—the sinner sees
 Himself *deprived* of arguments like these:
This strikes him dumb, that under foot he's trod,
 The bleeding mercy of the Son of God;
 His birthright for a mess of pottage sold,
 And bartered Jesus for a little gold.

SECOND PART.

CHAPTER I.

LEST the pure mind, well taught, and render'd clear
 Should feel a lack through what's *omitted* here:
 Another view of God's Electing grace,
 Reveal'd in scripture, here I'll give a place.
 This is Election founded on Decree,
 Not on Foreknowledge, which we all may see.
 But this to different *grades* of things relates,
 To *dispensations* and to various *states*
 Of men in life, their talents and employ,
 Their privileges and degrees of joy.

In this Electing plan the Sov'reign made
 Angels of light, and men of lower grade.
 Some made with talents five, and two and one,
 As was his holy pleasure should be done.
 Some were predestin'd to dim *nature's light*,
 Others to *Jewish blessings* far more bright.
 For us on whom Time's latest period's lay
 Was fore-ordained the blessed gospel day,
 God, as a Sov'reign, in these different ways,
 Varies creating and disposing grace.
 This his prerogative o'er all to reign;
 Nor should a creature question or complain.
 No man should wish to ask a reason why
 He's not an angel flying through the sky;
 Nor should the man that's form'd of high degree
 Boast o'er the low who can't his summit see.
 The simple reason is, as Paul would show,
 Because the Sov'reign Judge has made us so.*
 But gentle reader, do remember this,
 Lest you the humble path of truth should miss;
 Where much is given, more will God demand,
 When all before the impartial Judge shall stand:
 So equal all the ways of God appear,
 A truth to all the pious very dear,
 No reprobation herein is contain'd,
 Of unborn millions to eternal pain;
 But wise displays of infinite design;
 In all of which both *power* and *love combine*,
 To some in greater, others less degrees,
 Some honour'd, others not, as God has pleas'd;
 That each may move in his own proper sphere,
 And happy be, if he his Maker fear,
 But if he will rebel and sink to wo,
 'Twas not because the sov'reign will'd it so.

*1 Cor. iv. 6, v.

Those sov'reign acts of God's Electing plan
Of grace distinguishing his gifts to man,
May further be discern'd by scripture light,
If pure, and single, be our gift of sight.

Abram, the father of the faithful few,
Peculiar blessings was Elect'd to;
Was made progenitor of people great,
Where God himself should dwell and rule in state.
No one but him was called to this bliss;
All others reprobated were from this.
But did the mighty Lord of all below,
No favor small to any other shew?
Why then do children in the Bible read,
That people *all* were blest in Abram's seed?
Was Lot the righteous hated with the rest,
And fam'd Melchizedeck who Abram blest?
These, too, were reprobate from Abram's line,
Not to be branches of the Jewish vine.

In viewing nearer these mysterious wheels,
Where God in wisdom wondrous grace conceals;
Behold how Ishmael sov'reign grace rejects,
And Isaac, though the younger one, Elects.
No part can Ishmael have with Sarah's son,
But wander wild as a dishonored one.
But did the Lord no pity on him take?
Did he this Hagar's son for *ruin* make?
Look at the word—Says God I've heard his prayer,
And also will for him a seed prepare.
The God of Abram did this Ishmael bless.
And heard his supplication in distress,
Was with him, and his favour did engage,
Look at the scriptures quoted in this page.*

If God will be with me and deign to bless,
And hear my poor petition in distress,
I can rejoice, nor should I greatly fear,
Such kind of Non-Election as is here.

This "glorious" chariot of divine display,
Moves on and shews another brilliant ray;
In which we see beloved Jacob shine,
A chosen Father of th' Elect'd line;
While hated Esau grovels in the shade,
Both in the place for which they first were made.
Hated was Esau, that is, loved less,
As may this word in purest Greek express;
So hate our friends we must, that is, must love
Them less than what we do the God above,

*Gen xvii. 20. xxi. 13—17, 20.

Esau was loved less and reprobate,
 As to the blessing of the Jewish state;
 But was no more depriv'd of saving grace,
 Than all the world beside the Jewish race.
 Were *any* mortal ere he saw the light,
 Doom'd to perdition by resistless might;
 This wretched Esau doubtless must be one;
 Rejected, hated, and disfigured son.
 But even *he* was blest with Abram's seed,
 St. Paul in hebrews teaches us to read;†
 As truly blest, though in a less degree,
 As Jacob was, which all may read and see.‡

Before we see from distant sight retire,
 This cloud-capt chariot mixt with burning fire;
 And awful wheel of light before unknown,
 Turns *all* the Jews from Abram's graceful throne;
 A few excepted who believe his word,
 Who yet remain the people of the Lord.
 The Hebrews now must take the lowest seat,
 And be dishonour'd at the Gentile's feet;
 The purpose ends for which they were Elect;
 God, now, to heathen nations has respect.
 But are the Jews bound o'er to long despair,
 And no more subjects of our fervent prayer?
 Speak, zealous Paul, whom pious men revere,
 And tell us how these things to *thee* appear.
 Paul answer thus, My heart's desire and prayer
 Is that my brethren may for life prepare,
 For though they're cast away from honors great,
 'This don't include their everlasting state;
 If stubborn in their sins they don't remain,
 They shall be grafted into life again;
 While the new Covenant Elected ones,
 If they do boast, must fall like Abram's sons.
 See Romans 'leventh, twentieth, twenty-four,
 And chapters nine and ten which go before.
 Which chapters read—O read with cautious eye,
 Lest you should wrest the precious word and die.

CHAPTER II.

My Christian friend has long desired to find
 A scheme *well order'd* in Jehovah's mind,
 Yet man passes his freedom, to prepare
 By grace for life, or make his own despair.
 And here it may be seen. No giddy chance
 Across God's purposes can rudely dance;

* Heb. xi. 20.

† Gen. xxvii. 29, 40.

No thing occur but what the Almighty's eye,
 From all eternity did clearly spy;
 And wisely in his great decree direct
 For its occurrence and for its effect.
 So God foresaw that Adam would rebel,
 And did provide the Saviour ere he fell.
 He also knew who would his grace receive,
 And fixed their mansions ere they did believe.
 But as the actions of the creature man,
 Were but *foreknown* in the eternal plan;
 He's clearly left to choose or to refuse;
 Salvation to embrace or to abuse.

Decree and knowledge are no more akin,
 Than God's *own* act and what he knows of sin.
 What God *decrees* he will himself pursue,
 But what he *knows* another one may do.
 Yea, his decrees are his own act and deed;
 So he decreed his darling son should bleed;
 But *how* he was betrayed and crucified,
 Was as his knowledge had before espied.
 In God's decree the Son must spill his blood,
 And in the garden flow'd the purple flood;
 To show that grace without a wicked hand,
 Could work salvation for a sinking land.
 Yet 'twas decreed that Jesus Christ should *die*,
 And in the tomb till the third morning lie,
 For well the Father knew from ancient day,
 The Jews and Romans would his darling slay.

Decree and knowledge have their sep'rate part
 In the deep sufferings of the Saviour's heart.
 God knew the wicked would his Son devour,
 And hence expos'd him to their cruel power.
 For Christ *must bleed and die*. This was the plan
 Devised of old to save the rebel man.
 Peter explains this truth in manly skill.
 By God's *foreknowledge* and *determined* will
 Christ was delivered—but with wicked strife,
 The Jews conspired to take his harmless life.*
 Not by *decree alone*, but knowledge too.
 One fix'd his death, one saw who would it do.
Decree the dreadful suff'rings did ordain,
Foreknowledge saw who would inflict the pain.
 Again. The Saviour *knew*, the scriptures say,
 Not that he *ordered* who should him betray.†

Now, Judas, were thy treacherous deeds decreed
 As much as that thy Lord and friend should bleed.

O Judas! here thy test of virtue lies:

If 'twas decreed, thou'rt honored from the skies.

*Acts ii. 23.

† John vi. 64.

For though thy *motive* very vile must be,
 Yet *this* was also found in the decree;
 Motive and act decreed—not merely known,
 As much as that the Lamb should bleed and groan.
 In which, of course, thy Lord did much delight,
 For his decrees are pleasing in his sight.
 Then Judas look for life, and great renown,
 Thy love of money will procure a crown.

But if, as in a truth a solemn fact,
 God in foreknowledge only saw thine act;
 And how thou would'st abuse the power he gave,
 And sell the Saviour offered thee to save;
 How, from the Apostleship thou wouldst sink down,
 And so Matthias come and take thy *crown*;
 (As saw the prophet who in vision spake
 His bishoprick then let another take)†
 How from a minister who Jesus sent
 To preach his word, and call men to repent,‡
 Thou wouldst so soon, in deeds a devil be,
 And do the things that *Satan* should decree.
 Then woe be to thee, Judas, most forlorn!
 Good were it for thee thou hadst not been born.

If God decree from his eternal throne,
 All sinful deeds as fully as his own;
 Then good and bad to him alike belong,
 For which he should be praised in every song.
 Yes, candid friend, if every deed and thought,
 Be in decree, by whomsoever wrought,
 As much as are the course of stars and sun,
 Which at Jehovah's touch rejoicing run;
 When all the actions of the wicked ones,
 Satan himself or any of his sons,
 As much are *of* and *from* the Lord of course,
 And sweetly lead us to that holy source;
 As the fixed movements of the stars on high,
 Or clouds and winds which daily round us fly.
 And man, himself, no more an agent free,
 Than liquid waves which move by firm decree.
 Or thou the rolling orbs which *must* obey,
 The orders they received creation day.

Hence those who drink the deepest in this gall
 Seem to be thankful for a wicked fall.
 "Tis good," they say, "that we have sunk in mire;
 "It shows our weakness, and will raise us higher."

On Zion's height they're heard to cry aloud,
 "No man can turn from sinful ways to God,

*Ps. cix. 8.

†Acts, i. 20, 25.

‡Matth. x. 1—

"No more than various worlds he can create;
 "Or more than those worlds can vary from their state;
 "But strict necessity of moral kind,
 "Directs the course of every human mind."
 Yea, some so far sink in this miry plain,
 Where dark and deathly vapour rise and reign,
 As to deny that the *Almighty* can
 A power of *self resolving* form in man.
 "God never can create a human soul
 "Able his disposition to control:
 "Man has no power, they say, to regulate
 "This will to love an object or to hate;
 "Nor *any creature*—none of any grade,
 "Of all the beings who were ever made,
 "Can half a self resolving power or spring;
 "The right exclusive this of Heaven's King."
 Hence wicked deeds, since men or angels fell,
 Of such as live on earth or sigh in hell,
 Were all resolved by the eternal Three;
 As in no *creature* such a power can be.
 Yea, as no man or angel ever did
 Have power of self-resolving in this creed;
 All works of men or angels ever done,
 Were first resolved by the holy ONE.
 Whether of angels in their first estate,
 Or of the fallen ones, and reprobate:
 Of righteous Abel bending low to pray,
 Or wicked Cain who did his brother slay;
 Of all the saints engaged in holy joy,
 Of *all* the rest in Satan's vile employ!
 Reader! are these the truths of your delight?
 Then bring the precious system forth to sight!
 Behold your God in equal praises shine,
 For hellish deeds as well as those divine!
 If this be Him, my friend, you bow before,
 I think 'tis not the God that I adore.

But were this *worthy praise* and *real due*
 To God instead of Satan and his crew;
 A solemn query would originate
 How the Most Holy *could* so operate
 On beings pure resolve to bring?
 Could he by holding up a tempting thing,
 Or by begetting of his *holy* kind,
 A wicked resolution in the mind?
 All such dark views the sacred books deny;
 "God will not tempt* nor father any lie."†

*James i. 13.

† Titus i. 2.

Or did he form a devil for this end,
 To tempt a *sinless being* to offend?
 Is, then, the devil, sinful and forlorn,
 Of spotless holiness and beauty born?
 The father of all lies, deceit and fraud,
 The son, and darling, of a spotless God;
 The God of truth, legitimate grand-sire,
 Of all the liars, doom'd to endless fire?
 And is it more consistent that you state,
 The Lord a real *devil* did create;
 Than to suppose he formed in every thing
 Accountable, a self-resolving spring?
 And so to give account to God on high,
 For all the power he has to live or die?
 What though it be beyond our skill to see
 How this mysterious power in man can be?
 Are there not many things in air and main,
 Which no mere mortal ever could explain?
 Yet all of us allow them;—so we must
 Allow this power in man,—though of the dust.
 Man has this self-resolving power or not;
 But if he can't resolve, or rule his thought,
 Then must some other for him think and rule,
 And he but as a mere machine or tool;
 No more to answer for what he has done,
 Than for the actions of some other one.
 Reader, it must be vain for you to try
 Against this argument to shut your eye.
 Nothing is plainer that was ever seen
 Than that this doctrine does the sinner screen;
 If man no power of action has, then he
 Is not accountable a child may see.

Here the fam'd Edwards' scheme, unmasked appears
 Which has defied the truth so many years:
 Whose labor was to prove in logic strong,
 By arguments reiterate and long,
 That men no self-resolving power possess,
 But yet are culpable, nevertheless.
 This plan so weak, because in error found,
 That a mere strippling may its rage confound,
 Has, notwithstanding, darken'd all the world;
 Like to the smoke that from the pit was hurl'd.
 O Edwards! most unhappy was thy plan,
 To wound and kill the agency of man;
 To make the Lord the agent great of sin,
 And clear the devil who did it begin.
 Well may thy works, voluminous and blind,
 Be called too "tedious for the common mind;"

For where truth appears serene and bright,
'Tis labor hard to turn it into night.

The humble way of life is open laid,
That man was just below the angels made;
And formed with proper powers of agents free,
To choose the way to life or misery:
While God in mercy lengthens out his days,
And kind instruction gives to change his ways;
With grace to justify and cleanse his soul,
And power by tender care his mind to rule,
So man, his maker God will glorify
By his existence, tho' he live or die.
And if he choose to walk in wisdom's ways, -
He'll be most happy in his Maker's praise;
But if he choose the voice of truth to slight,
He'll perish—yet the throne of God be white.

CHAPTER III.

In these few hints the reader clearly may
Behold the sovereign potter and the clay:
And how one vessel is for honor made,
Another formed for a dishonored grade,
That is, that some have MORE than others given,
Have GREATER gifts and light bestow'd from heav'n.
But the LEAST favored may by grace divine,
Improve and live—may suns and stars outshine,
While the MOST honour'd if they do rebel,
Will but sink deeper in the flames of hell.
Sovereign Election here runs thro' the whole,
Yet life and death set forth before each soul.
How different this from that most horrid dream,
Which once I took to be the gospel scheme.
That the almighty God from passive earth
Moulded one vessel for a heavenly birth,
Then made another for the worlds below,
And will'd and order'd that it should be so.
Relief from these distressing views I sought,
And found it where I own I never ought,
In Universal notions—flatt'ring sounds;
But which, alas! could never heal my wounds.
O the poor souls still holden in these chains,
With hearts defil'd and agitated brains!
To whom the devil whispers in their ear,
"If you are Elect you never need to fear,
"God can never your soul to ruin send,
"For whom he loves he loves unto the end.
"God loves your soul, and 'tis exceeding strange,

"That you should fear eternal love will chang
 "All *sin* you cannot conquer if you try,
 "But if you sin ye shall not surely die,
 "The covenant of grace can never break,
 "Though you the holy ways of truth forsake.
 "On grace's door, you know, this motto's grav'd,
 "Let sin be damn'd, the guilty sinner sav'd:
 "Even tho' you should be stain'd with human blood,
 "Yet God doth know 'twill terminate for good.
 "Did not king David act this sinful part,
 "Yet all the while one after God's own heart?"

Thus these delusions many souls deceive,
 As the old serpent first betrayed Eve.
 The only way to shun these tempting lies,
 Is first to shun the doctrines whence they rise;
 The only way delusions strong to shun,
 To take the cross and after Jesus run.
 Soon as the daily cross seems too severe,
 The Calvinistic system will appear;*
 This but receiv'd and call'd a plan of grace,
 Then Universalism comes apace:
 Deism then, the sickly soul will bind,
 With Atheism following close behind.
 Next Scepticism all her front will rear,
 And then the 'dreadful horrors of despair,
 Now hell itself appears in all its dread,
 With all the torments of the guilty dead.
 So deep the gulph, so ne'er the slipp'ry brink;
 The soul, swimming with fear's about to sink,
 A spell of magic ruin downward clings,
 And murd'ring ropes and razors handy brings.

*The Author uses this expression *Calvinistic System*; not meaning thereby the doctrines of grace as believed by the candid of that order; such as the new birth, efficacious grace in conversation, justification by the blood and righteousness of Christ alone, imputed to the soul; together with the depravity of man; his helplessness of himself, and the impossibility of his ever meriting God's favour by his doings: these are all allowed to be true, and they cannot be *too highly esteemed*. But what are meant are those evil notions which run through the whole system, as a system, like a vein of poison to all the others; such as absolute election, and reprobation according to *decree* limited atonement, stating that Jesus Christ did not taste death for every man; that every one that is born again is beyond all danger of being lost; and that the new birth is before repentance. These doctrines are holden by many of them, and by such as have been considered the most *sound* in the faith and cannot be too much guarded against.

O awful route! yet this I know as well,
 As Adam did his shame the day he fell;
 I ran these barren, gloomy systems through,
 Till everlasting torments hove in view.
 I saw the burning lake, the smoke arise,
 The damn'd souls—I heard their groans and cry,
 And the loud thunders of eternal night:
 The vengeful lightnings flashing in my sight.
 Nay more—I *felt* the burning sulphur flow:
 So near I pass'd the mouth of endless wo.
 Here satyrs dance, ominous ravens croak,
 The frightful screech-owl yelling thro' the smoke;
 The gnawing worm,—its piercing deathless sting,
 O the keen anguish such dire spectres bring,*
 What David felt when Satan him beguil'd,
 With murder and adultery defil'd
 The same I felt,—a hell of inward smart;
 The deep impression still upon my heart.
 'Tis true we wander'd in a different line;
His wicked deeds,—but damning errors mine,
 Yet I as really defil'd as he;
 Though none but God my filthy state could see.
 The heart were strong delusions brood and reign,
 Will be defil'd with ev'ry sinful stain;
 The pure in heart, from ev'ry sin reliev'd,
These God's Elect, can never be deceiv'd
 I speak the things I know—for all within,
 By slow degrees, I found defil'd with sin.
 And ev'ry *sense* began the filth to share;
 My feeling, smelling, tasteing, eye and ear
 I saw except I found some purer way,
 These must act out,—and I be cast away.
 Not all at once did these dark shades come on,
 Nor all at once did I in errors run,
 Nor *even* wilfully, delusions took;
 Hence the good Spirit never me forsook;
 But holy joy would sometimes drown my fears,
 Through all this down-hill way for sev'ral years:
 And God did own wherein I preach'd his word,
 And hundreds by my labors turn'd to God:†
 But O how soon they wander'd far away,
 Altho' church members mostly, till this day.
 The children given me and whom I taught,
 Were, as I was, soon into bondage brought:

* These metaphorical expressions of a despairing state, a step beyond which admits of no recovery, it is confessed, are lavish; but it is hoped that the reader will never know by experience that the half is not told.

† I baptised in the time between four and five hundred.

We all were bond-men, carnal slaves at best,
 As in the seventh of Romans is expres'd,
 Indeed this chapter fourteenth verse and through,
 Was all the gospel liberty we knew.
 I yet, with others, nothing knew about,
 How Paul mere law-work here was pointing out,
 FREEDOM from sin, and steady peace with God,
 We never look'd for on this earthly clod.
 O the unhappy many here confin'd;
 And here contented; stubborn in their mind!

But I was not contented in this plight,
 For once I had a touch of clearer light.†
 By times I closely sought some holy ground;
 Some bloody sea, in which my sins to drown;
 Some cleansing stream to wash the last remains
 Of all my foul disease and inward stains;
 Some heavenly gale, some Paradistic air,
 To quell the fumes of brimstone and despair.
 The great Deliv'rer how I long'd to see;
 To make these domineering masters flee:
 To turn the traitor from his flinty throne,
 And reign himself within my heart alone.
 But O this monster hence could not be driv'n!
 His seat being delegated him from heaven.
 Faith had no pow'r to work against the Word;
 Sin *must* remain;—so ordered by the Lord.
 O how th' old serpent boasts in scaly pride,
 Where'er he gains God's purpose on his side!

The Lord beheld me in this dreary night,
 And knew how much I strove to know the light,
 And sent a sovereign helper from on high.
 The Holy Ghost—who made the darkness fly.
 He, like the sun, shone through my very soul,
 And shew'd the fountain that would make me whole.
 Made all the gospel clear as chrystal glass,
 Holy in every line and firm as brass:
 My faith began to stand on solid rock,
 And Satan felt within a fearful shock.
 Faith, mighty faith, now turn'd her eye within,
 And plead the blood that cleans'd from ev'ry sin;
 She heard the gospel sounding loud and shrill,
 BE CLEAN FROM SIN! FOR THIS IS HEAV'N'S WILL,
 SIN SHALL NOT REIGN! Hence Satan quick retire,
 And leave this heart for Christ,—the soul's desire,
 O the most *free* and charming gospel sound,

† While with the Methodists at first I had but little knowledge
 of the theory of holiness, and less of the experience: as I was
 there but a short time.

A flood of cleansing truth which flowed around
In which I humbly bathed my sinful soul,
And felt the floods of purest pleasure roll.
I rose,—I looked around—the lions were gone,
And I was left to share the spoil alone,
With my dear Lord; whom now I clearly saw,
By whom so late delivered from the law.
Who came to dwell with me, and make my way
Brighter and brighter till the perfect day.

And since I've been delivered from the snare,
Which few have ever been who've ever wandered there,
Have 'scaped the rocks that fatal prove to most,
I raise this beacon on this stormy coast.
Look out! Look out! ye mariners that sail,
Wafted along by every flattering gale;
Dead works [a bed of sand] lie just before,
And strong the current sets you on this shore.
Dead faith [a range of rocks] lies near your way,
And heavy winds incline your ship astray.
On top of tide these both are out of sight,
'Tis dangerous sailing hither in the night,
Take day-time for it, when the water's low,
And safely through these narrow straits you'll go.

CHAPTER IV.

If now my friend resolve to strive to rise,
And gain the mark where thousands miss the prize
Take this direction, nor from it depart;
That hope is good which purifies the heart;
And only that—no other hope will do,
When God shall bring the works of men to view.

This hope will save from trusting in your deed,
And teach you how the blessed gospel reads;
That not your *seeking*, but the *grace* you seek,
Must be your *trust* in all you act or speak:
To trust in *seeking* rather than the gain,
Is saving chaff to fling away the grain.
Who trusts in chaff instead of precious wheat,
Has found, as yet, nothing but chaff to eat:
Has never bore the blade and then the ear,
To see at length the perfect fruit appear.
Your prayers and strivings do you real good
No farther than they lead to Jesus' blood.
If right you seek your sorrows will increase,
Till precious grace applies a sweet release.
And when the grace appears so great and new,

Your works will sink in such a glorious view,
 And seeking still you'll wonder all the while,
 At sovereign grace that saves a wretch so vile,
 And teach you more and more the wondrous scheme,
 Of seeking grace so high in your esteem.
 But not to hope for blessing from the skies,
 Without a faithful striving for the prize.

Beware of trusting in an outward name,
 While God and angels see your inward shame.
 A wolfish heart though clad in sheep's attire,
 Will never save you from the burning fire.
 See the King's daughter glorious to behold,
 All pure *within* and deck'd in purest gold,
 This the fair Shulammite* whom Wisdom saw,
 Like two *joint* armies, Gospel and the Law.
 Like those *two bands* which Jacob had become
 When he return'd united to his home.

O shun whate'er of *inward* beauty fails,
 Nor make the Christian like a pair of scales;
 One scale the *new man* having half the heart,
 The *old* the other holding the other part;
 Or else by turns each one possess the whole:
 So make a common harlot of the soul.
 This hour the soul and Jesus, but anon,
 The soul and Satan, Jesus left alone,
 One scale this hour rising up to prayer,
 The next the other up to curse and swear.
 A heart divided after such a rate,
 Must be considered as the devil's seat;
 With strong convictions oft, but nothing more,
 The Saviour outward knocking at the door.

The tender-hearted Saviour long will bear,
 But not his glory with another share:
 This wav'ring mind in vain may beg and cry
 Serving two masters with a double eye:
 While the pure virgin heart, an inward power
 Given to Jesus *only* ev'ry hour
 Has Father, Son, and Holy Ghost within
 A constant guard against the monster sin,
 The devil, doubtless, will his terrors bring,
 And roar around this palace of the King;
 But peace will reign within, while due regard
 Is paid to ev'ry word of Christ the Lord.

* The definition of Shulammite is, perfection.

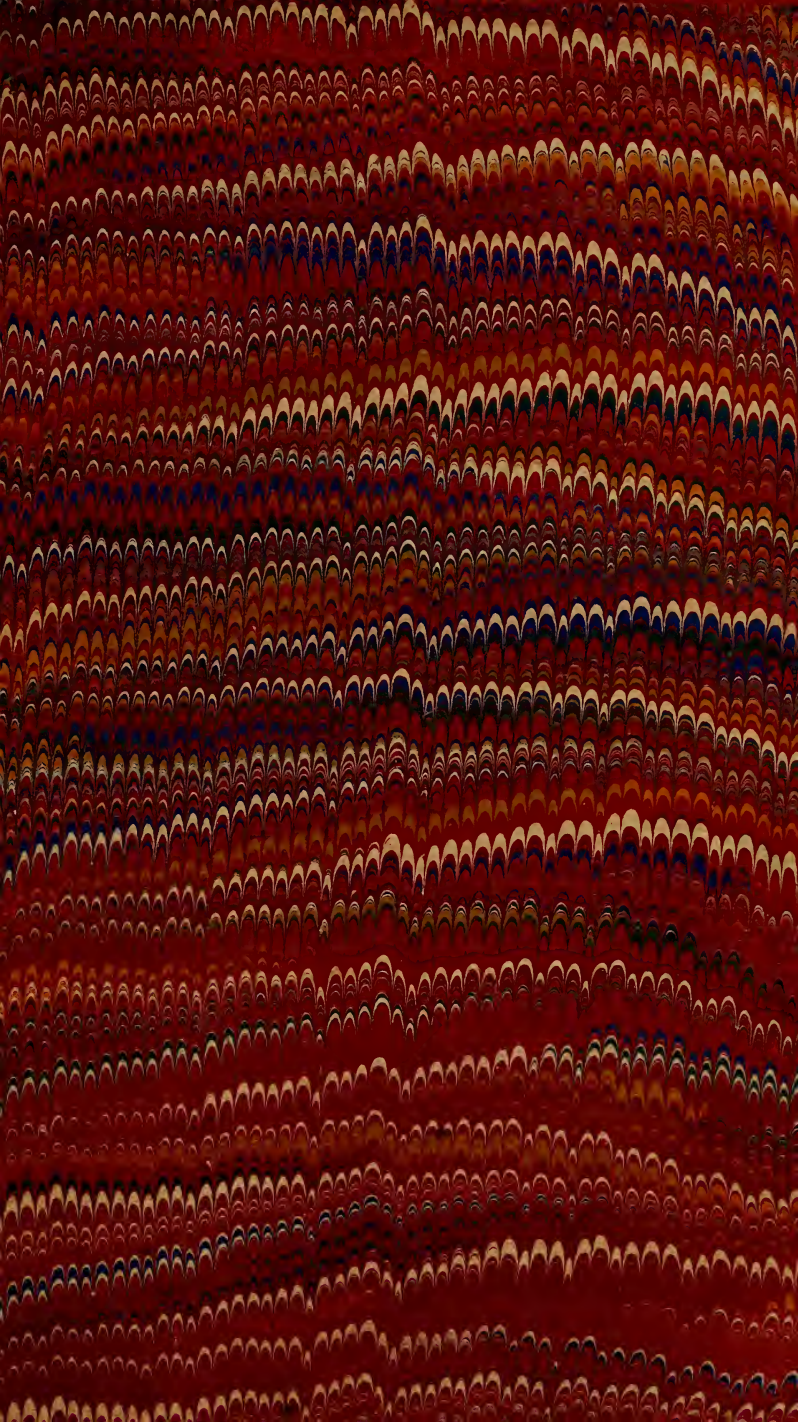
THE END.











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